

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Time and Chance

(Jerry Fite)

Around 2:00 A.M. on Sunday, December 15, a mother driving with her teenage daughter by her side proceeded across Fairmont Parkway not realizing that her time on earth was about to come to a tragic end. Traffic is light; she faces a green light which to all means “go”; so surely she is not about to lose her life in a traffic accident. But “surely” is not the determinate of all outcomes. Sometimes, “time and chance” intersect to confound us.

Solomon addresses this aspect of life under the sun when he observes, “*that the race is not to the swift, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all*” (*Ecclesiastes 9:11*). Being fast of foot surely weighs heavily in determining the winner of a foot race, but other factors can also occur, changing the outcome. The swift can stumble over the foot of a fellow competitor, or injure a knee in making a sudden move on the field, allowing a slower runner to

win that particular race. In living our lives, we must factor in “time and chance”.

The mother did not know that another woman was approaching the intersection with other things on her mind than obeying all traffic laws. This woman had just stolen items from Wal-Mart, pushed a security guard down to the ground, and was fleeing the scene of a crime. She was not out to be slowed by an accident, but she broadsided a vehicle, which just happened to be in the same intersection at the same time, killing the mother and hospitalizing the teenager.

Time and chance happened to end the life of a hard working mother and innocent driver. Time and chance happened to abruptly end cherished mother and daughter conversations. Time and chance happened to stop a runaway thief. These two particular women coming together at 2:00 A.M. to end a life was not a foreseeable probability, but it became a harsh reality.

We should realize that we cannot factor in all the possible

realities that can occur in a given time of our lives. Solomon emphasizes this when he concludes, “*for man also knoweth not his time*” (*Ecclesiastes 9:12*). We can feel healthy, with no thought of it being our time for death. Aneurisms, heart attacks, and traffic accidents are realities that have rudely invaded the lives of many illustrating many times the truth of man not knowing his time.

Knowing this, why would we allow our immediate family members to disperse in the morning with unresolved anger issues? Is it a given that all will meet again in the evening? How often do we neglect the wisdom to not allow the sun to go down on our wrath (*Ephesians 4:26*) because we know we will have time later to resolve the issue? The fact is we do not know our time, and time and chance happens to all.

Fearing God and keeping His commandments is the wise way of living with time and chance (*Ecclesiastes 12:13*). Knowing our God and Judge is the antidote for not knowing our time.